

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Greetings to all members as Fall is approaching and some of the trees around here are already showing signs of the magnificent colours that we usually get. Of course, at this point, no-one knows what kind of Fall it will be, as we have had the strangest year weather wise. At this time, our lawns are usually brown and dry and do not need much, if any, cutting. However, at the moment, our lawn is as green and lush as it was in early Spring!

Further to the comments on the Unified Exhibit Evaluation Form, which was used in Dayton at NTSS-2009, the ATA Board of Directors passed a motion that urges judges at all WSP shows to use the ATA "Official Thematic Adjudication Sheet" (also called "Thematic Score Sheet") to help them determine award levels for thematic exhibits. Let us hope this encourages thematic exhibitors at future shows. Needless to say, at NTSS, the ATA sheet will be made available to the jury.

The ATA has been experiencing some of the problems which have been affecting other philatelic organizations, namely; lack of funds, declining membership, increased cost of running annual shows and meetings and the production of a journal or newsletter. Jack Denys, the President of ATA, recently produced a draft of a document titled "Toward a Vision for the ATA". In Part 1 of this document, he addresses some of the above problems with data to show declining membership and increasing costs. In Part 2, he has drafted a plan and posits possible solutions. It will be interesting as the year comes to a close whether this approach will find favour with the membership.

The Biology Unit, needless to say, has also had similar problems, and possibly we may borrow from ATA if some of their solutions produce positive results. One thing which I think about a lot is the increasing age of our officers and editors and what might happen in the future if we cannot find younger people to carry on the long-standing traditions of the Biology Unit.

The last journal did not contain pages on Marine Invertebrates and my apologies go to the editor, Ian Hunter. He had actually sent me a column and somehow I missed this fact when I was assembling the issue. That data is included with this issue. This reminds me that we do not at present have an Associate Editor for Paleontology, so if there is a Paleontologist out there who could contribute something, it would certainly be appreciated.

Plans are already under way for the annual ATA gathering, which will be in Denver, one of my favourite cities in the U.S. A prospectus and entry form should be available shortly and I hope more of our members will get their feet wet and produce an exhibit for the show. If anyone needs help of any kind in this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Until next time - Alan J. Hanks

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